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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

THE DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

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October 25, 1962

TO : The Secretary  
THROUGH : S/S  
FROM : INR - Roger Hilsman

INTELLIGENCE NOTE: SOVIET STRATEGY IN UN DISCUSSIONS OF CUBA

Khrushchev's acceptance today of U Thant's bid for a two-week standoff on Cuba raises the question of Soviet strategy in UN discussions of Cuba.

Objectives. The prime Soviet objective at the UN and elsewhere is to maintain the Soviet missile bases in place in Cuba, at least for the time being. For the present the Soviets may not have given up hope of keeping them there indefinitely. But even if Moscow assumes that the Cuban base may lose its strategic value if it cannot be built up to its originally planned strength, the Soviet Union may hope that continued presence will tend to establish its legitimacy and maximize its value as a bargaining counter.

To this end the Soviets hope to generate the maximum political pressure upon the US to drop its quarantine and to inhibit further US actions which might make the Soviet position in Cuba untenable.

At the same time the Soviet Union is procrastinating in order to determine whether the US case against the Soviet missile deployment will be accepted by world public opinion or whether the communist argument that Soviet military aid is justified by the existence of US bases on foreign soil may be persuasive. The possible quid pro quo which the Soviets might be able to command in negotiations for the removal of their missiles will depend on the outcome. In addition the Soviets are waiting to see exactly how the quarantine will be implemented before determining on what counter-measures they may take.

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- 2 -

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Tactics. The Soviets will attempt to focus the attention of the UN and of the world at large upon the US actions rather than upon the Soviet missile deployment which gave rise to them. To this end Moscow has refused to admit that it has stationed Soviet missiles in Cuba. The Soviet Union will continue to attempt to create the impression that a grave threat to the peace is created by American actions while the Soviet Union and Cuba are peace loving and willing to negotiate. The Soviets will seek to promote "compromise" proposals which tend to undercut the US position.

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